



STATE OF DELAWARE
OFFICE OF HIGHWAY SAFETY
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Newsletter Article

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When is My Child Ready for an Adult Seat Belt?

Children from birth to age 8 or weighing up to and including 65 lbs. must ride in an appropriate child safety seat or booster seat. The time to transition your child out of a booster seat and into a seat belt usually comes when the child is between 8 and 12 years old. Keep your children in booster seats until they outgrow the size limit of the booster seat or are big enough to fit properly in seat belts.

For your child to properly fit a seat belt, he or she must:

- Be tall enough to sit without slouching;
- Be able to keep his or her back against the vehicle seat;
- Be able to keep his or her knees naturally bent over the edge of the vehicle seat; and
- Be able to keep his or her feet flat on the floor.

Additionally:

- The lap belt must lie snugly across the upper thighs, not the stomach.
- The shoulder belt should lie snug across the shoulder and chest, and not cross the neck or face.
- Never let a child put the shoulder belt under an arm or behind the back, because it could cause severe injuries in a crash.
- Keep your child in the back seat because it is safer there.

And remember, always check your child's belt fit in every vehicle. A booster seat may be needed in some vehicles and not in others. If the seat belt does not fit properly yet, the child should continue to use a booster seat.

As a parent, you are your kids' strongest influence when it comes to modeling safe driving practices, including buckling up every time you get in the car. Teach your family that safety is the responsibility of all passengers as well as the driver.

Buckle Up. Arrive Alive DE.